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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0165
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5423
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3071
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1320
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1290
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2260
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 4005
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4931
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 001792

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP
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TAGS: PREL PINS PGOV ID TH
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN THAILAND -- INDONESIA HOSTS NEGOTIATIONS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The GOI hosted talks involving representatives of the Thai government and southern rebel groups, September 20-21. According to Indonesian contacts, both sides underscored their commitment to resolve the conflict peacefully and agreed to regular meetings under Indonesian facilitation. Since taking office, President Yudhoyono has asserted his willingness to try to help resolve conflicts in the region and this effort was part of that policy. END SUMMARY.

"PRODUCTIVE" TALKS

¶2. (SBU) Indonesian Vice President Yusuf Kalla hosted talks aimed at reaching a settlement to the conflict in southern Thailand September 20-21 in Bogor, a city just south of Jakarta. General Khwanchart Klahan, commander of the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command, led the Thai government delegation. The Pattani Malay Consultative Congress, an umbrella organization of southern organizations, represented southern groups.

¶3. (C) Amid some confusion (see below), Indonesian interlocutors told us the talks were "productive." The Thai government and southern rebels underscored their commitment to resolving the conflict peacefully. According to these contacts, both sides agreed on a broad framework that involves meeting southerner's demands for economic development and recognition of their distinctive cultural identity while assuring Thailand's territorial integrity.

¶4. (C) Anies Baswedan, an Indonesian academic who participated in the negotiations, told poloff that the main goal of the first round had been to build trust between the two sides. This first round of talks did not, however, lead to agreement to take any specific actions, he stressed.

SOME CONFUSION

¶5. (C) Some press reports here quoted a Thai Foreign Ministry spokesperson who denied that the RTG was involved in any way with the negotiations. Tri Sukma (Nanu) Djandam, a

foreign affairs advisor in the President's Office, rejected the denial. He told Pol/C on September 22 that the GOI had coordinated the talks closely with Bangkok and that Thai government representatives were present and full participants.

NEXT STEPS

¶6. (C) Presidential Spokesman Dino Djalal announced to the press that a second round of talks was slated for November 1-2 and a third round for mid-November, also in Bogor. Baswedan told poloff that Indonesian mediators hope that by the third round the parties would agree on some concrete steps to reduce tensions in southern Thailand and to build trust between local people and government security forces.

¶7. (C) Since taking office, President Yudhoyono has asserted his willingness to try to help resolve conflicts in the region and this effort was part of that policy. (Note: He has tried to help out re Burma and has sent a series of letters to regime strongman Than Shwe, but to no avail, thus far.) Djandam of the President's Office told Pol/C that the President was monitoring the talks closely while letting the Vice President and the Department of Foreign Affairs take the lead.

HUME